



**'WHERE'S
THE CRIME?'**

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SUPER MARIO

The angry egghead who
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VIA: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

MAIL BAG

'Radler's minions skimped on reliable computers, proper lighting and clean air'



OUR WOUNDED SOLDIERS

IT'S HISTORY, March 20. Michael arrives at my local post office. Reaching into my mailbox, I remove it and deliver mail and bread for my son. Once I am seated, I do a quick scan that displays the cover of the March 26 issue. As a retired service man, I find the photo of Cpl. Michael Barneville overwhelming. After I read the story about Cpl. Barneville, Master Cpl. Mike Lowman and Master Warrant Officer Lauren Gayton, I would like to say that I relate there. I also salute those services and servicewomen at all rank levels who are ensuring that our soldiers receive the support and benefits outlined in Michael President's story. I don't think I've ever been more proud of the Canadian Forces. **Harvey N. Gold, Chief Warrant Officer (Retired), Waller, N.S.**

TRUCK REPAIRS and readiness of the three men depicted in this article should be an inspiration to all. It is also encouraging that Michael Barneville, Lauren Gayton and Mike Lowman seem to be getting the best of medical care, especially in light of the scandals taking place with wounded veterans in the U.S. However, the government's policy that they be discharged if they can't support their so-called universality of service standards leaves us cold. It might be understandable to discharge soldiers who fell down the stairs at home and were no longer able to perform their military duties. Doing that to those who are injured while serving in a combat zone is unacceptable. Others have a moral duty, and you job opportunities, to ensure partial employment for all of our wounded men. **Andrew and Mary Hebbach, London Storm, Ont.**

Ted as I am about the loss of Canadian soldiers' lives in Afghanistan, I am even sadder about the raising of our young men and women who are returning to a highly uncertain future in a society where to be fit, to be young and to be fully functioning are, seemingly, all important. As we see globally, we have reliable war efforts locally to welcome, employ and exclude those women and men. I would encourage the government of Canada to employ those keen on returning as soldiers. Thank you for this read, but unfortunately, piece of important reporting. **Rob Brink, Orma, Ont.**

I HAVE BEEN a long-standing supporter of our troop involvement in Afghanistan, but after reading this story, I have nothing but respect for these outstanding individuals. They have transformed the demonstration and pride in duty from the battlefield to rebuilding their lives with the utmost decorum. These men have certainly changed how I look at the front-line players in this drama. Furthermore, I ask myself why more civilians can't exhibit just a fraction of these soldiers' dignity as the face of adversity? **Kathryn Pye, Grimsby, Ont.**



I AM A CANADIAN Forces reserve who served in Afghanistan, and a member of the Wind-up Regiment who lost Cpl. Barneville at our Christmas tree dinner last December. I can empathize with Cpl. Barneville's situation. I experienced a difficult transition when I returned and settled back into "civilian" life. It was glad to see that his story was told in such a heartfelt, personal way, highlighting both his accomplishments and his (and our) future challenges. **Cpl. Mark Herbert, Windsor Argus, Windsor, Ont.**

ALL THAT FLIES

FOR KIDS, I READ the story on the honeybee deaths ("Mystery bee plague vexes farmers," National, March 26) with interest. But the picture you used to illustrate the story is not a honeybee. It's a fly. **Kerr Cris, The Richmond National Ltd., Seaforth, Ont.**

YOUR PICTURE shows an insect that may be a wild wing of some sort. You may be interested to know that various wild insects have always polluted our crops. It just is that the honeybee is especially sensitive to being domesticated, and does a great job of pollinating large masses of honey and pollen. I do hope that colony collapse disorder isn't already in Canada, my few hives all died without leaving a viable new bee for the year ago. **Anne van Arman, Minto, Renfrew, N.S.**

REMEMBERING RADLER

In Ken MacQuinn's preface ("Core of Black's former business partner, David Radler," The week paper, Toronto, March 12), he wrote "Radler got the Jerusalem Post, which he considered more of a crime than a business." Considering the Jerusalem Post as a source did not stop Radler from using the same business practices there that he used elsewhere. He ordered repeated mass firings and eventually destroyed the union presence. He hired gunmen who violated staff contracts and skimmed an enormous amount of reliable computer systems, proper lighting and clean air (humans and dirt mice from the printing press into the newspaper on the floor above). They pushed on to the staff the need for, and even the virtue of, cutting their wages and stripping their benefits and work conditions, while Radler was filling his pockets. **Enrico Meek, Jerusalem**

BLACK WATCH

MY COMPLIMENTS for publishing Conrad Black's article in defense of all that he holds dear ("In his own words: the power to indict, and destroy," Opinion, March 19). There are always those who, like the jokers they are, attempt to bring down what are so successful in life. Bill Gates is a prime example of a man who fought and won his battle with the U.S. government. I trust that Conrad Black can do the same. **Marlene Stubbart, Mill Bay, B.C.**

EVERY MORNING I sit and read different parts of Maclean's over coffee at the hotel Gasparie. It's my habit to start out especially juicy or really funny phrases to my wife or dog, whenever might be within earshot. Con-



A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF DONALD TRUMP

On Friday, the Trump-owned Nbc USA program crowned a new winner—Rachel Smith of *Real Estate*. Two days later, the Donald was in Toronto sharing professional wisdom at a real estate expo. He offered support to Conrad Black, advising him to “hang tough” against the charges he’s facing. On the topic of retribution, he was more blunt: “When somebody screws you, screw them back in equal. You gotta hit hard, and it’s not so much for them, but for other people watching.”

Good news

Peace gets a chance

Hope for international peace got a much-needed boost on several fronts this week. The leaders of Arab nations agreed to revive a five-year-old plan to end an establishment lasting peace with Israel. There were agreements on the peace talks might soon resume in an effort to end the brutal, 20-year armed rebellion in northern Uganda. And perhaps most significantly, hard liners on both sides of Northern Ireland's long-running conflict finally reached a power-sharing agreement that will allow for the resumption of self rule and hopefully a permanent end to the violence between Catholics and Protestants that has claimed more than 3,600 lives since the 1970s. Catholic leader Gerry Adams urged all Irish people to remember the victims of decades of bloodshed and to pursue peace in the future. “Now there's a new start, with the help of God,” he said.

Walk this way

It turns out that too much TV isn't making kids fat after all. A new study out of the United Kingdom, which looked at the habits of 1,300 kids between the ages of 12 and 16, found little correlation between obesity rates and the amount of TV and video games a watcher limited. Instead, researchers found that a bigger contributor to the problem is the amount of time spent as a couch potato, which has risen to 40 minutes on average. Instead of allowing the kids to get far afield to school, mothers report encouraging them to walk or bike. “The fact's good news on both fronts for parents: you don't have to stop watching TV at night, and it'll cut down on the time you spend shuffling the kids all over town.”

Bad news

A suspect list

After 9/11, George W. Bush ordered America's intelligence agencies to start sharing information about terrorism suspects. Today, they've barely kept track of all the “co-operation.” The *Washington Post* revealed last week that the government's current terror watch list contains a whopping 433,000 names—a threefold increase since 2001. In a measure of candor, the man in charge of the list admitted that his staff is overwhelmed with “thousands of messages a day.”

Then, days before the Quebec election, the province's chief electoral officer accused manipulation by Muslim women vote while wearing full face veils. The plan was rigged, he said, but Marcel Bouchard withdrew it for the wrong reasons, demonstrating the failure of leadership—in government and the Islamic community—that permits bad tactics to prevail.

Everybody loses

Neither major agency to be missing the deadline vote on the ever-controversial Canadian and heat this year—and it's nobody's favour. Due to an unusually mild winter, ice flows in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are melting alarmingly fast. For instance, this means annual conditions for sailing pay. For real page, it poses the danger of falling through the ice and drowning before the hunters even have a chance to sharpen their blades. The only comfort we can take from this is the possibility that the worst weather may slow the annual migration of preppy activists to the ice flies.

Birdbrains

Experts agree the threat of avian flu can only be managed through global co-operation, so it was discouraging to see that for three months influenza has refused to share virus samples with the World Health Organization in protest of the WHO co-operating with anti-vaccinationists. Influenza has a legitimate complaint—samples are being used to make vaccines it can't afford to pay for with overblown spending in Bangladesh, Egypt and elsewhere, impeding medical research. It's a real mess. We can only wish the world a quick way to make the point. ■

FACE OF THE WEEK



FRENCH PRESIDENT Jacques Chirac laughs with German Chancellor Angela Merkel at celebrations for the EU's 50th anniversary

Heterosexxy

The era of the homosexual has finally given way to that of the heterosexual man. According to *Men's Health* magazine, the current ideal is no longer the well-oiled, martinis-sipping party hopper, but the more ruggedly handsome family man. We say it's about time that party boys like David Beckham were nudged out of the limelight by guys who like to hear with friends, but still want to go home in time to rock the kids into bed at night and occasionally cook a family meal.

(that are often “misconceived” and “sometimes just flat-out wrong.” And once you're on the list, he says, it is nearly impossible to get off—even if you're innocent. Just ask Maher.)

Threats and bullies

Theresa Fire both inside and outside the Islamic community last week, highlighting the sad state of religious dialogue in Canada. First came a message to the Muslim Canadian Congress condemning the “slaughter” of the moderate segregationist Muslims, Parwan Duttan Shahid and Thiruk Parah.

BOREDOM IS THE VILLAIN.



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THE COLOURFUL MARIAGE

WHY JOHN BAIRD IS AS ONE CAT, FOUR KITTY LITTERS

Arriving at the third annual Ottawa Business Society Fur Ball, Laureen Harper realized she had forgotten her dad's tuxedo back at 24 Sussex. Her comfort for the evening was Environment Minister John Baird, who got her back when he accidentally stepped on her beautiful black dress. Mrs. Harper wore her hair in a relaxed updo, showing off the double postings she has in each ear. In conservative Ottawa, that qualifies you as punk. The first look of scandal had simple elegance dangling. Her. There's where the second area had the conservative overtones, overalls given to her by Stephen Harper on the birth of their son, Ben Harper. The theme for the evening was Mardi Gras North. Volunteers held lanterns, guests wore masks and there were floral displays and real artificial dogs in the basement. The PM's wife admired Bark & Purr's pooch plate that was part of the silent auction. The dog biscuits included cinnamon "roll" ones and "well-being" ones. Mrs. Harper, a big

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON LAUREEN HARPER'S EMERALDS AND THE PURSE SHERPAS

supporter of the Ottawa Humane Society, is a Foster parent for her cats. She says she can't take older cats because the three adult cats she has at 24 Sussex don't like other older cats. Baird, who was warmly welcomed at the event despite his missing tuxedo, has one 16-year-old female feline at his Ottawa home. Due to his demanding schedule, he says he keeps four litter boxes in his basement.

THE THINGS I DO FOR MY BOSS

Welcome to the House of An. Denise Elton is Roma Ambrose's assistant, you occasionally end up carrying her Louis Vuitton purse. Her previous (and current) job begged her to go shopping for a suitcase bag. But once recommended Bob Sarge, it was enough to bring it all off. In fact, it has become his trademark in the halls of Parliament. He's also carrying the purse, Tomes said the macho Ontario, "What is the Vuitton?" Competing for attention in the press department in the House of Commons, where Denis Schryber, communications director for Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla, is often spotted



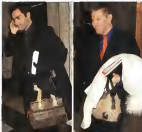
MATHEU'S VASES in display at the National Gallery of Canada



POUCHES plus fun

holding his boss's Coach bag. But the House of Ambrose has a secret weapon in communications: Mrs. JOURNAL. Bailey. Before working for her boss, she'd been working for her boss, the stylish redhead, often that in very liberal dress, was a fashion production manager at Fashion Television.

DOB SERVE: O'Neil with the Vuitton, Denis Schryber has the Gucci



STOCKWELL DAY IN HUSKIE PINK

When the winners of the 2007 Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts recently sat in the Speaker's gallery during Question Period, Conservative MP Mathieu had a half-eye view of Paul Martin, a Quebec artist now living in Vancouver. The entrepreneur of the Salsbury Brothers. Award for excellence in the fine arts, receiving \$25,000, up \$10,000 from last year's award. His winning was on display at the National Gallery of Canada. An OGP he was a single episode and shocking yellow trousers. Some of the Tomes amused themselves by trying to figure out who among them would look good in Mathieu's bright clothing, which he is known to dye himself. It was decided only before noon. Tary Rahm Jaffer could pull off Mathieu himself thought his colorful ensemble would look like Stockwell Day. Asked what he thought of QP, Martin replied, "I think it's a little bit like politics, we wouldn't be very far." So in QP the equivalent of own drawings? "No," the associate professor of visual arts at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and author of *See Peter: Enriching in Context*, was quick to point out. "I am drawing, an very good." ■

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THE QUIET REVOLUTION

In one night, Quebec's political landscape changed. It's all good news for Stephen Harper.

BY PAUL WELLS, BENJOT AUBIN AND MARTIN PATRIQUE

AFTER IT'S OVER, you almost always realize you could have seen historic change coming if you had only known where to look.

On Monday night, Mario Dumont and his *Action démocratique* (ADQ) party became the latest incarnation of a winning electoral blow-delivered by Quebecers who are tired of political elites. From four seats in 2003, Dumont's party—heretofore more a curiosity than a national cult of personality—emerged like some much-ridere scaffolding around a young leader—ranked to 41 seats and 33 per cent of the popular vote, ahead of the Parti Québécois and only seven seats behind Jean Charest's incumbent Liberals.

This was history with the gloves off. The PQ was reduced to its lowest share of the popular vote since 1970, the Liberals to their lowest since 1976. Quebecers had their first minority provincial government since the 19th century. In only two months, Dumont

and his party, long treated as a bunch of mopey bourgeois who needed to be kept away from the good clean, had doubled their share of popular support and positioned themselves as the most important new force in Quebec politics.

Charney, who struggled all night before finally coming out on top in his own Sherbrooke riding, was rocked back on his heels. "A severe judgment," he acknowledged in a letterman election night speech. But the damage to the PQ and the broader Quebec nationalist movement was even more devastating. The PQ has seemed dead before, and always manages to get up off its death bed. But the humiliation of André Bouchard, in whom many Québécois had put so much hope for a long overdue constitutional change in leadership, was a shattering blow. "Quebecism and the process of thinking about the democratic process made which they've

been locked up for 30 years," said Michel Fiset, a political analyst in Montreal.

As the dust began to settle, the heretics of bourgeois history, as always too late to help us see the other pool. Guessing what will happen next is more challenging than ever.

So far, long-haired chum take on new significance. Would Quebecers' ingrained social-democratic instinct force present left-leaning parties against what Lucien Bouchard called "the cold-war" of conservatism from the rest of Canada? Maybe not. A day ago, pollsters working for Paul Martin's federal Finance Department were finding that Quebecers were *Reiter* than any other Canadians to believe they paid too much tax. In June 2003, Joseph Fiore, a bright young Parti Québécois cabinet minister, risked losing his job by saying his party might provoke a middle-class backlash because it couldn't get over its infatuation with an even more middle-class welfare state. "Thirty-four per cent of Quebecers don't pay tax," Fiore said. "Imagine the pressure on the tax."

Could new establishment governments for ever keep a disempowered challenger out of the



winner's circle? Not necessarily. Luc Dumont, two critically injured, Stéphane Dion in the federal Liberals and Ed Stelmach in the Alberta Conservatives, make their parties' leadership from under the noses of better-placed and more prominent former-rivals.

Stelmach's victory also had elements of the country's most obvious regional political metropolitan—Calgary in Stelmach's case, Montreal in Dumont's—that would be so important to Dumont's breakthrough.

Finally, Stephen Harper saw how rapidly the political ground was shifting in Quebec and adjusted accordingly. In the 2006 election, three of the four Harper campaign stops in Quebec were Conservative MPs' travel out to have roots in Dumont's party, not in the provincial Liberal fold. Harper worked closely with Charney to say any price restraint his with any Quebec premier at least since Lester B. Pearson and Jean Lesage in the 1960s. As Dumont began to rise in the polls, however, Harper took pains to emphasize that the Quebec Liberals were not his ally either. "I lead a party that is a coalition at the provincial level," Harper told the *Montreal Post* in January. "There is another opposition party, another party leader, Mario Dumont, who doesn't want a federalist."

So the omens and signs were early. But what was left when the dust settled was something fresh and new. If it has a face, it is Mario Dumont's.

THE ADQ was long written off as a party of neo-fascist extremists, but Mario Dumont

came out of the shadows, and delivered a fiery election-night speech reminiscent of Lesage.

On Monday, at the ADQ party headquarters in Rivière du Loup, the Lower Gaspe region, Dumont was represented in the National Assembly since 1994, there was little room for theory about national federalism and the end to the sleepless listening separationist. There was Mario's show. The nationalist mascot boy from the village of Gaspésie filled his victory speech with the kind of colourful banter that might have been borrowed from René Lévesque. "Today, Quebecers went to the polls to write a page of history," he thundered from the podium. "They opened a new chapter written with the ink of their own destiny."

After those parts of rhetoric, parts of Dumont's speech sounded like the flow from a bill of sale. "It is also planned to see the enthusiasm for the ADQ's vision of autonomy for Quebecers, to affirm ourselves without separating, and to unite ourselves of thought." This was not really new—Dumont worked throughout the campaign to position himself between Bouchard's harsh sovereignty and Charest's peaceful dumplings with Ottawa, neither did it answer many questions. Perhaps the biggest: how much opposition will there be between Canada's Conservative government and Quebec's right of centre opposition?

"Officially, not much," said a hearing Pierre Boudreau, a local ADQ organizer. "Unofficially, there's a lot. There are a lot of old-stock Quebec Conservatives around here. And Mario is a small conservative at heart."

Already, ADQ leaders say Michel Lague,

a member of the ADQ's national council, will run for the federal Conservative seat in the next election, and will use the ADQ's suddenly formidable election readiness to do so. "And if he runs, he will win," Boudreau said. "It's a great day for Quebec, and a great day for Canada." (The same sentiment was voiced, in almost the same words, by Stephen Harper the next morning in Ottawa.)

Monsieur Dumont, who has increased his share of the popular vote in every one of the four elections he has contested, is a step closer to becoming Quebec premier—a dream inscribed in his yearbook caption way back some 10 years ago. Born into a Liberal family in Quebec, Dumont was a precocious, devout student who read the dictionary in his dormitory and whose circle of friends consisted of his three roommates on the school's quiet show team, including Thompson Lewis, the comedian in half who came in third in 1984.

Grown up there, the friends circle of *Amis* for the Big, was Dumont's reason for high school. Dumont excelled at the quick and often brutal test of his encyclopedic knowledge, and wanted everyone to know as much. In 1986, Dumont's first love in the provincial finals and the chance to compete in France, triggering a national sensation from Dumont. He had his first of a well-replicated, and took to throwing pocket change around the room in his teammates' bedrooms. He blamed himself, but also Radio-Canada, which, in his words, "didn't strike, didn't broadcast the tournament."

CHAREST acknowledged the vote was a severe judgment of his but at least he kept his seat.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJOT AUBIN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJOT AUBIN

"He didn't perform as well because the television cameras weren't there," says his coach and mentor Gilco Quattri. "It certainly affected his performance. He's brilliant and he liked people to know it."

De mont took the quick exit he had hoped on Grosse Ile, wrote to Montreal to study at Concordia University and to eventually head up the Quebec Liberal party's youth wing. His favourite quotation was a professor's approximation of Plato: "The price of not engaging in politics is to be ruled by your enemies."¹⁰

Michel Risonnaye and Dumont's position went from yes to no every half hour. Unlike Pizarro and Bouchard, Dumont abandoned his support for secession the day after the vote, at least.

"We didn't consider Marx a socialist because no one could remember the party program," writes Neron. In 1998, upon ascending to Niran, Dumortier declared himself an "absolutist." Today he calls himself an "autocrat." "Why the change?" he explains. Neron says "He wanted to get re-elected."

staff, also learned the hard way about Durnont's over-optimism. During the Charlotte town negotiations, when Durnont was still with the Liberals, "I spent an hour explaining every detail of the accord," Parrella says. "He [Durnont] said, 'That's fine. I'll be there in 10 minutes.' He never showed."

the polls happened—in 2000, as Québecers gave victory to the Parti Québécois but seemed uncertain that Charbonneau felt it to lead there—Dumont *News* editor, punditism by voicing too much with English Canada. He delivered a harsh speech on tax rates and social government to the Canadian Club in Toronto. The review in *Irish papers* were sympathetic. But the speech was an utter disaster for Dumont. Bad timing. Dumont had forgotten to show up with a list of questions he would stick from Ottawa, or federal “intrusions” he would gang against “The ADQ has made one big mistake, and it was this speech,” says Guy Lafont, a Université de Montréal political science professor who was the ADQ’s party president in 2003. Standing in front of what Lafont calls “the biggest Can-

ambition "to engineering" he had promised to get the promoter's job. It tugged him to an establishment away—and, to prove that had fled observers, Charvat ran this time out as the most of the same man for a promise that won't at all but it wanted more of the same. As for Beauclair—gay, nasty, with a documented story of drug abuse while he was a musician in Beauclair's cabinet—for many Quebecers he might as well have descended from blues.

men's' debate, Quebec's turn for a global moment: how should local populations adjust their roles and habits to make overseas residents feel our feasible presence? Our own countries? The same question arose when carbon-wearing S&Bs wanted to join the RCMP 20 years ago, or when Ojibwa debated, then rejected, incorporating Islamic dress laws more recently. When a series of flood rains raised the "seasonal accommodation" question last summer, I discovered most solidly for the night of all that Quebecers do demand that immigrants adapt to Québécois ways. Many saw Quebec as a better than a metaphor. But most of these people were in Montreal. There's whole privilege outside the metropolis, as its residents see through a thick difference.

small town Quebec is not much different from small town Canada" Voters support Mario Dumont for the same reasons they supported Harper, Rivest says "middle class suburban, individualistic values of NIMBY [not in my backyard] law and order"

Perhaps that should simply no longer be true, anyone who claims that one must wait the Democrats' rise or fall was Harper in 1999, at the inaugural article he co-wrote with political scientist Tim Harper. Harper said a post-Canadian conservative movement must lead out in the so-called line of Quebec nationalists, which gave rise to Manning, Duplessis and the Union Nationale two generations ago. "While not in itself a conservative movement," Harper and Hargrave wrote, Quebec's line streak "appeals to the kind of voters who in other provinces support conservative parties."

So now Harper, who only last summer was sitting badly in the polls, has an embattled nest of friends in Quebec. The Liberal government likes his version of federalism, as the ADQ opposition likes his views of most other issues. Which explains the long flirt on Gilles Duceppe and Stéphane Dion in Quebec.

Guaytépé's half-brother touted as a replacement for Bouleau as head of the Parti Québécois. But relegated to third-party status, the PQ may no longer be worth his time. Utters in Quebec City. Dion has, so far, been surprised at every turn in his own province by Harper. Dion spent half a decade arguing there was no "fiscal imbalance" that

Drummers with an economy that's as loud as the provinces without enough. Harper claims to have solved the fiscal imbalance with his March 19 budget. Chretien's plan promised \$700 million in income-tax cuts straight out of Harper's fiscal-imbalance kitty. Given repeated Harper's parliamentary assertion of fiscal responsibility, "the Drummers" from Ottawa

the federalist, the Quebecers' natural reaction within a united Canada" but in Quebec, Harper gets all the credit for the initiative. Does that give him a trump card? It would be difficult for Harper to play to the nation after losing an election, so it was the perfect moment, "propositional." Liberalism who appeals to Quebecers' true hearts. A bumper crop of

On Tuesday, Parliament Hill was abuzz with rumors of a snap federal election, as Harper could cash in the cash Quebec voters delivered to him on Monday. Harper insists he wants to keep governing, not a start yet another campaign. But whether

Canadians vote now or later, it's already obvious that Quebec's harsh, not-so-quiet resolution will have repercussions far beyond the province's borders. ■

WITH THE PQ REDUCED TO ITS LOWEST SHARE OF THE POPULAR SINCE 1970, IT'S NOT CLEAR WHO MIGHT WANT TO TAKE IT OVER



ANDRE DOUSCLAIR was the focus of the FO's hope for generational change. His shattering defeat leaves the sovereigntist movement demoralized and adrift.

It was like he had no water in his veins."

As it turned out, Dummer's very outsider status became his asset. Chretien spent four years in office delivering very little of the

The issue, or cluster of issues, that crystallized Duane's private out-of-court lawsuit was the so-called "reasonable accommodations," pig-farming, light industries, most of these outside of Montreal," Langlois says. "It's a healthy reaction to question whether the [political and media] elites of Montreal have become disconnected from the rest of the province."

speaking, melting pot in America. But Quebec is the big city (well in Toronto and Vancouver who didn't take Stephen Harper coming a year ago, they attacked their life for that of the country neighbours. "That image of Quebec is a different society, with cool, chic values was a little self-serving, and a tad artificial," Senator Jean-Claude Boudre, another longtime Bourassa associate, says. "In real life,

with rumors of a snap federal election, as Harper could cash in the chips Quebec voters delivered to him on Monday. Harper insists he wants to keep governing, not to start yet another campaign. But whether Canadians vote now or later, it's already obvious that Quebec's harsh, not-so-quiet revolution will have repercussions far beyond the province's borders. ■



CITY council considered relocating the men, but that might mean recognizing the underground economy

CONDOS BEAT CASH

Calgary's iconic Cash Corner could become a casualty of the boom

BY NICHOLAS KÖRBER • By 7 a.m. on a stiff, dark, chilly Alberta morning, they have already begun to gather—two, then four, then eight, with, on some later, two dozen men lined up at the corner of Calgary's Centre Street South and 13th Avenue, stamping their ankles back and forth for warmth. The buses do not arrive until an hour later, pulling up on tracks and sidewalks to permit the pang of sometimes construction workers, landlapers, garbage men—whomever is called for today—to swart their vehicles and negotiate terms. "It's just like fishing," says one of the fishermen, among the cast of actors at this huddle fishing, the rewards are meagre. "You can stand here all day and make something," says another.

In a city drowning in money, day down town strip—dubbed Cash Corner for the day labourers here seeking casual work—would seem as anachronism. Even with more jobs than people, Calgary is home to men willing to endure frostbite for a chance to work. "It is a contradiction," he, one says

cheerfully. "I stand here like a prostitute." Some see the men (occasionally a woman) appear at Starbucks queue signs—"the visible sewage of the street," in David Lewis, executive director of the local business revitalization note, gaze it. The average wage is \$12 an hour—\$100 for the day. Many who agree to less make the sweat of the street. And, while some are on Calgary and homeless—others of the city's housing shortage—and other addicts or alcoholics, most have apartments and a job or two, and appear on the corner when they have time to spare. Others, several old-patch workers returned to Calgary for spring break up in Alberta's north, are active regular IT chaps. All use the corner to service a city that is increasingly expensive and despised more and more for "people so rich they don't even know when the gas cap is in their vehicle," in one labourer's put it.



LOTTERIES: WHO'S MISSING THE SHOP MINDERS?

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.'s oversight in relations is not evident. Retailers have been waiting for one good reason—because they can't let it slip, "people aren't at the time, let's be honest." We need to start enforcing "Ontario's anti-lottery law." Andie Mann doesn't recommend banning lottery ticket purchases by retailers in the wake of his probe into provincial lottery corruption.

Pawel dies ago—some time it back as far as the Depression—Cash Corner spring up spontaneously outside a wooden shack housing its long-time. And now Cash Corner, too, must go. In immediate surroundings, set for consideration, will soon receive 3,000 new residents. City council is divided over whether to officially recognize the workers—as well as their underdogs and, perhaps their employers—by relocating them. Some believe them to hold the city's classless-fair attitude. "They didn't need city council to make it work," says Bill McKee, one such adherent. "That's probably why it's working so well."

And performance work well. Not everyone Mark White, general manager of the work. Hotel Arts, has long complained that the men use his parking lot as a toilet and that his foreign guests fear them. "Someone has to step up and take accountability," he says. "The site, once just around the corner, has been moved in the past, though without an explicit city policy. And in February, city council very rarely made a similar move, considering a proposal to relocate Cash Corner and provide the men shelter and washrooms. What do the men think? Some would embrace a roof and a toilet. But others are even in Cash Corner's unassuming, organic efficiency. The labourers gather here, in place, in person because "they just can't live the structured lifestyle." A new, city-sanctioned home—with amenities, no add-ons, a "bad idea." He shouldn't lose any sleep. worry that condoning the practice would leave the city vulnerable to hustling acts scattered the move. A report looking over options is due by December.

That may be too late. During Stampede this summer, a tiny corporate unit is to be erected next to where the men gather, an event aim to push Cash Corner out. If the city does not choose a new locale—or if it attempts to suppress Cash Corner—the labourers and their various employers will choose new home themselves. "This kind of thing is going to spread all over," says Low. "It would only fragment and pop-up elsewhere."

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW ANDERSON

ALL ABOUT CANADA

Tearing down Canada's 'welfare wall'

BY PETER SHAW TAYLOR • When former U.S. president Bill Clinton promised to "end welfare as we know it" during the 1992 election, he wasn't just talking about his own country. His plan to reduce welfare rolls by encouraging greater worldwide participation was copied in Canada as well. Last week, Finance Minister Jean Chrétien announced the introduction of imposing U.S. welfare reform with his new Working Income Tax Benefit. The WITB is a carbon copy of the U.S.



FLAHERTY WANTS to make it easier for the poor to work

old Earned Income Tax Credit in the U.S. Both focus on reducing the "welfare wall" because many social benefits, from subsidized day care to drug plans, are tied to welfare. It can be more attractive for recipients to stay on the dole than cross the welfare line. If they do get a job, their benefits are taken away and their tax bill rises. The effective marginal tax rate for Canadians with income of \$10,000 can be nearly 50 per cent due to the welfare wall.

The WITB makes work more appealing than welfare by giving low-income working families a \$1,000 refundable tax credit to compensate for the lost social benefits and new taxes. Ottawa calculated that this measure would allow 600,000 Canadians to enter the workforce and improve the lives of another 1.2 million working poor.

These estimates come as no surprise to American analysts who have observed the more generous EITC for decades. A recent study by the Brookings Institution reported that the poverty rate in U.S. children would be 25 per cent higher without the EITC. "It's been remarkably successful," says policy consultant Steve Hall, the author of the report. "It has lifted children out of poverty and provided parents with an incentive to work." The only question is why it took Canada so long to copy it. ■

Dead pets, and really big lawsuits

BY JOHANN KATZBERG • This year, North America will spend close to \$50 billion on their pets. That's approximately double the combined foreign aid budgets of Canada and the United States. There has never been a society that devoted more time and money to keeping, pampering, and generally anthropomorphizing its animals. But in one key way, we have remained brutally unsentimental. In the eyes of the law, the lives of Fluffy and Fido are dirt cheap. In almost every jurisdiction in North America, pets are property, and like a piece of furniture, worth pretty much what you paid for them, less depreciation. The courts might apportion the amount for a show dog or a racehorse, but anyone seeking compensation for emotional distress and loss of companionship has generally found that life is more like Old Yeller than Fluffy.

This could be about to change, however. The deaths of at least 14 cats and dogs from what appears to be tainted pet food has spawned more than \$40 million in class actions lawsuits against Purina, Petco, and Oat's Muen Food Inc. And, along with monetary bill, and the cost of the \$6 million state-of-the-art facility, are seeking solid damages for owners' pain and suffering. "People are going to get their money," says John Redden, Jr., a Toronto lawyer who has filed suit in Ontario. Handberg has inquired about joining his \$40-million class, filed in the name of an ill-year-old house kitten, Ditty, in at least two cases.

"I even got an email from a Canadian soldier in Afghanistan about his family's arthritis being home," says Redden. Courts across North America already face the in the value of companionship in many thousands of human misadventures. Now the time might be ripe for similar lawsuits about animal friendships, says Wendy Adams, a McGill University law professor. "There's a strong argument," she says, "that you're not going to be laughed out of court."

Maria Ruda Inc., which is pursuing to compensate affected pet owners for their pets' lives, declined all comment on the lawsuits. ■

Should we send our spies overseas?

BY JOHN COOPER • It's odd to hear a business president pleading with politicians to stay working. But Margaret Bloodworth, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's national security adviser, said this week that federal anti-terrorism agencies have all the cash they need to do the job. "We have had a huge influx of resources in the last five years," Bloodworth told the Senate national security committee. "We probably have as much as we are able to absorb in the short term."

She said the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, like the RCMP, needs to fight a

goal of \$600 million. Spending, CSIS's budget ballooned from below \$200 million in 1996 to about \$120 million this year, and it is set to rise to over \$400 million next year, despite a recent budget by-election in the recent federal budget. Restructuring and training to make use of that money are the big challenges.

Bloodworth's plan for CSIS capacity to serve as a platform for ambitious Tory plans. Public Safety Minister Bloodworth has promised to either broaden CSIS's mandate to include espionage abroad, or, less likely, spin off a new foreign spy service. CSIS now runs only domestic security operations, relying on "business of" "outside" foreign intelligence from friendly governments. It doesn't spy overseas like the U.S. CIA or Britain's MI6, which prompted a former British intelligence chief, Sir Richard Dearlove, to shake Canada last year as an intelligence "borderline."

But Bloodworth dismissed the notion that Ottawa is under pressure to get out of what called the "sophisticated group" of foreign intelligence gathering, saying she has not heard any such complaints from allies. And, along with repeatedly insisting that more spending on spying is not needed, she was asked when Ottawa asked about the dangers Canada faces. On the threat posed by global terrorism, she said, "I do not think we are the prime target." And on the theory that fighting in Afghanistan has heightened the likelihood of a terror plot against Canada, "I think saying it is impossible. I am saying I have not seen evidence of it myself." ■

TOO MUCH security money, Bloodworth has said

FOR PETS, it's been a month of eating dangerously





A LOCAL irrigation project, one of many, memorial for dead Canadian soldiers (left)

'You will not recognize it'

After 3½ years, Canadian development aid is making a world of difference in parts of war-torn Afghanistan BY ADMAN R. KHAN

It's notorious not to forget the world's own Canadian soldier's war made as the pursuit of peace and stability in Afghanistan, especially when fighting in southern Kandahar province dominates the collective imagination of Canadians and the death toll from that deployment overshadows the losses suffered in earlier days. But two names should suffice to remind Canadians that Canada's role in Afghanistan has been more than the seemingly endless war of attrition in the south: Sgt. Robert Alan Short, and Cpl. Rob Lee. Christopher Brownrigg, both of whom have their lives while fighting peace to nation defined by war. Their deaths, barely forgotten, should stand for something.

Short and Cpl. Brownrigg were killed in October 2001 when their army killed

over a Taliban anti-tank mine in the Lalabad Valley south of Kabul. The deaths highlighted the danger Canadians faced when permitting Lalabad, and the larger Char-a-Sab district of which it is a part. This was their area of responsibility, and at the time a small town (now a village), an area of responsibility (now a province), whose despoiled and war-torn people were left to fend for themselves. A former warlord and warlord ally of the Taliban.

Three and a half years have passed since that incident. Over that time, Canadian forces have helped rebuild the state, and taken along with them the attention of Canadians. But for the locals in Lalabad, the work our soldiers did in Char-a-Sab, patrolling some of the most dangerous

in a soldier's nightmare, was as easily forgotten. For them, the peace Canada's troops helped to secure in their region, something they not only never forgot, now that Char-a-Sab has been transformed.

"Snowline's response," says Robert Khan, the same Afghan they who accompanied Marston to the Lalabad valley back in 2005. "So much has happened. So much development has taken place." The region's state of this valuable district has been nothing short of remarkable. Since peace settled over the valley, development work has been accelerating, a process bolstered by Canada's continued aid and interest in making sure a region where two of its men died will not slide back into the same state of uncertainty those men were there to eliminate.

Canada's role in the new project is to

it and how much it contributes to the stability of the Afghan government." The NSP, which helps villages plan and manage their own development projects, and MBFA, which is developing a macro-level financial system, is doing this work.

For the NSP, the issue is simple. "Afghans want to work for themselves," says Wala Ahmad Barakat, the program's executive director. "The NSP is an Afghan government initiative. At its project in the field, you will never see signs announcing the foreign nature of the program. The money may come from the international community but we want people to know this is an Afghan project."

While the administrative level still has a significant foreign component, the plan is to "Afghanize" the organization as soon as possible. But on the ground level, the system

is still working. Other villages were approached by their development, have heard about NSP success and are up to their own EDCs.

But the NSP cannot rely on projects fast enough to meet the demand of development-starved villages. In a survey released on March 19, the Senate Council, an international policy think tank in Brussels, pointed out that Canada has spent an estimated US\$100 million in military spending since 2001, while investing only US\$10 million in Afghanistan development aid. This massive gap needs to be filled, says Senko, adding that other conflict areas around the world like the Palestinian territories and Bosnia Herzegovina have received five to 10 times the amount of aid currently flowing into Afghanistan.

Why the discrepancy? For one thing, the sheer absolute lack of infrastructure makes delivering aid a truly business in Afghanistan. Add to that the low population density in rural areas, and security issues, and it's not difficult to understand why reconstruction is moving so slowly. "This is why we only work in four- to five-kilometer radius and not any field office we've set up," says Canadiana Barakat. Her program coordinates aid for the Baghdad-based International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), one of the 11 international institutions (MFI) working with MBFA. "We serve poor people who have to wait in an office to pick up loans or make payments. We have to be close to clients."

Still, Afghanistan's macro-level sector, where Canada is the lead donor, has shown unprecedented growth. In three years, says Anwar Ali Barakat, MBFA's managing director, the "micro-finance" sector has achieved higher than overall operational self-sufficiency. That has never been needed in any micro-finance initiative anywhere in the world. Part of that success, says Barakat, has to do with the culture of business in Afghanistan and the way MBFA has structured the loan process. Unlike other NSP's approach, MBFA does not set up a local village organization that collects donations from villagers. After its words, the pool of money becomes collateral for any loans village group. Unfortunately, that means anyone defaulting on the loan is taking the village's savings. In Afghan society, that translates into dishonouring your word, says Barakat. It's a strong cultural barrier.

But MBFA's key strategy that Char-a-Sab has been relatively difficult to work in. "There is absolutely no security here, the village is not secure and the locals are not cooperative," he says. That means no assistance in the most charged BRAC adds to every loss. "We don't blame the people," says Barakat. "We blame ourselves for not explaining the charge properly. This is our last resort in the past years. You have to make people



FIDELITY in a Char-a-Sab village shows community spirit. And workers hope that success in that region will be a strong example for the villages in the more volatile south.

Char-a-Sab, driving a development boom. And while development projects in Afghanistan have not always been stellar in terms of performance, a few years of trial and error and new mechanisms to fight corruption seem to be paying off. They shift in progress over the past couple of years has been in just an Afghan face on reconstruction projects by rebuilding Afghanistan's grassroots level institutions like the National Solidarity Program (NSP) and the Micro-finance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MIFSA) have succeeded by using an "Afghan for Afghan" development model.

Canada is a local driver in both of these initiatives, spending a total of \$45.5 million on the NSP and \$55.4 million on MIFSA to date. "When we look at what we want to fund," says one CIDA source, requesting anonymity, "because CIDA employees are not authorized to talk to the media, we look at the success program has shown, at how grassroots

work is by appealing to Afghans themselves to take responsibility for their country's reconstruction. In the initial phase of a project, villages are asked to elect their own community development council (CDC). This CDC is then responsible for identifying what the community needs and mobilizing villages. The NSP requires that any CDC eligible to receive a project grant must raise at least 10 percent of the money needed through donations, volunteer work or commercial activity. That, NSP workers say, gives the local community some role in the project.

In Char-a-Sab and Lalabad, the NSP's reputation has spread. It's difficult to drive around this area (nighttime) without seeing villages working on NSP-funded projects, mostly irrigation canals. "We're only making 300 Afghans [44.75] a day to do this work," says Roshan Murgash, a village worker on one irrigation scheme in Kaka Lakan village, "but the canal will also help our economy,

understand this is an administrative fee. After operational costs are covered, any surplus left over is then used to defray more loans. This is how microfinance becomes self-sustaining. Because we are a non-profit organization, the surpluses we apply are not a for-profit owner's share." In other words, not exactly a practice based on *altruism*.

The program is far from a failure. Chawin's business market is a living example of what microfinance can do successfully. Since the fall of the Taliban, it has grown fourfold. "There was nothing here when the Taliban were in power," says John Robinson, a banker who used a \$40,000 Afghan [2000] loan to expand his shop. "Most of the shops here are because of loans, and business is good."

Others, including farmers, have used loans to buy livestock and seeds, expanding their agricultural operations. With the help of NSP experts and schemes, they are starting to prosper. "A huge part of that success," says Arbut, "is by the help of Canadians in 2006 MBSA has had the funding it needs to carry out its work, because Canada has provided it. This year also looks okay, but microfinance and the NSP need continuity to work."

That continuity means sustained peace, which remains an uncertainty not only in Chawin but in most of Afghanistan. The Lalander Valley is a vulnerable region because of its strategic importance and proximity to less secure areas further south and east. "The Taliban are never far from us," says Abdul Rahman, a member of the Bazar Kala village CDC, busy supervising a road construction project funded by the NSP. "If BSAV brought peace here, without peace, none of this could have happened. If BSAV leaves that area, the Taliban will be back in five or six days. Our army will not be able to stop them."

The key to sustained stability, most aid workers agree, is to expand the peace the Lalander Valley currently enjoys to the southern provinces. No one believes that will be easy, but those running MBSA and the NSP are willing to try. With an influx of extra cash provided by the Harper government's February announcement of up to \$200 million in additional funding for Afghan reconstruction, both programs are heading south.

"We realize the difficulties we will face," says Roy. "But our plan is to continue operating the same way we have been. We have no security concerns. We don't have backed out. Our program is about assisting with the people. You can't do that from behind



MICROFINANCING efforts (above, in Chawin's field) are helping Afghan farmers expand and start businesses flourish.

blast walls" But he admits the microfinancing system has to deal with local realities. Women, for example, who have been BSAV's primary recipients in other parts of the country, will be more difficult to access in the rigid tribal system of the southern provinces.

But the fact is, in a country where more than 70 per cent of the population still lives in the countryside, the need for rural development is crystal clear. Tangible change in Afghanistan begins in the remote villages where access to even the most basic services like clean drinking water and electricity are unheard-of villages like the ones where Canadian troops are building a new school. Says Ali Khan, principal of the Mahabud Middle School in Lalander. "If we have security in one village, it will spread to the next. When the people see what the village gains from having peace, they will want the same. That's how development will spread."



POLAND: MEN RAISING SKIRTS RAISE EYEBROWS

The government is considering a ban on men wearing skirts. Ordinarily that wouldn't be an issue in the skim, Catholic nation. But Poland's become a hotbed of traditionalist and far-righting beliefs, and there are complaints about them lifting their skirts. A beef by one Krakow resident is typical: "I saw one lying in the gutter the other day with his kit round his waist. He was drunk and it was freezing cold—I am surprised he did not get frostbite."

But things must move forward, he warns, with Afghans leading the development road. "The mistake the Russians made was to promote development and then impose it along with their Communist ideology. Progress came with a cost—thousands of Afghan war fatalities. The people would not accept, especially the Taliban." In this, the 21st century attempt at modernizing Afghanistan, the problem is no longer Communism but Western liberalism. Villagers with access to television know there is a better life out there, but they also fear the moral decline of their controlled social order, a decline they associate with the world of MTV and Bollywood.

The key to achieving a balance is uniformity, says Barnard. The NSP previously tried to make it possible in the south, but, he notes, "the problem was that there was a lack of awareness about the program. People didn't realize that this was an Afghan program, run by Afghans." Since that could fail, the NSP has been a public awareness campaign, going as far as to recruit a radio station that runs popular radio soap operas to include scenes as in their shows that help explain the NSP. "So we have movies, for example, where these fictionalized villagers meet in CDCs and discuss what projects they want to do next. The songs have been a huge success."

The hope is that these new programs in the south will not only change the face of development and reconstruction, but also the way of thinking by showing villagers what they can achieve if they take their initiative. If local buy into the program, the hope is that they will desire a continued peace to allow for more development.

It's been working in the north, and with some unexpected side benefits. In Lalander, years of conflict drove people away from this pristine river valley. "In the past," says one farmer, "it was a place farmers would come to on Friday holidays parties. They're starting to come back, which means this summer I should be able to make some extra money selling my fruit and vegetables to tourists." Local tourism in Lalander? Three years ago, the idea would have been laughable. Today, it's a distant reality.

That, perhaps, is the most poignant legacy for Sgt. Short and Cpl. Blumenthal, a leg they left themselves, if they were still with us, might have been proof of it. ■

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What the troops in Iraq are reading

BY BRIAN KETNINE • Victorio based the *Book of the Week*, which has moved out as a passionate reader for millions of online providers of hard-to-find titles, has customers around the world. This includes Iraq, where most of its clientele are members of the American and British military, and other foreign nationals like police officers, firefighters and civilians.



EVERYTHING from J.D. Salinger to 'Why are we here?'

entertainers generally mentioned them. When they're looking for a reading material at night, according to Alchukko publicity manager Richard Davies. They do not want novels, of course. The *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and Larry McMurtry's *Lessons from a Horse*, to name two.

But they're also looking for some practical help. With desert conditions, for instance: *The Physics of Desert Survival* and *Desert Dances* by Ralph Blaugstad might prove useful as that regard, as could the *Introduction to Living Engines* by James R. Smith. (Scaling engines, an alternative to traditional combustion engines, can harness solar power.) Then there's the need to understand the new neighbors. Abe has fielded requests for an English-Yiddish dictionary, and an English-Ukrainian one. Although Ukraine is now scaling down as part in the coalition of the willing, it originally sent 1,600 troops to Iraq. Someone has to know with them.

Unexpectedly, understanding what on earth they're doing in Iraq is also a high priority. Soldiers have been looking for *American Foreign Policy* by Charles Kegley & Eugene R. Wittkopf, *Just and Unjust Wars* by Michael Walzer, Anthony M. Compagno's *Travels, Agreements, and Resignations of Man*, *Democracy*, and *Democracy* by U.S. House member, and last but not least, Sun Tzu's 2,500-year-old classic *The Art of War*.

Not that the troops have forgotten plain old suspense. One reviewer, a little behind in his reading, wrote a copy of *John Henry* Peter and the *Golden Rule*.

Lukashenko: dictator on the way out?

BY MICHAEL PETROU • The response of Belarusian authorities to an opposition protest on Sunday following the standard protocol for suppressing dissent in a totalitarian state. In the days leading up to the planned demonstration—held to celebrate the 10th declaration of a short-lived independent Belarusian state and to protest against Alexander Lukashenko's continued rule—opposition leaders and activists were arrested, universities scheduled events for the day of the protest, and students were told that if they were seen at the rally, they would be expelled.

At the rally itself, 16,000 students showed up. They were "freedom" and carried either the Belarusian and white Belarusian flag (replaced by Lukashenko with a Soviet-era hammer), or the flag of the European Union, emblem of the European Union. Lukashenko's crackdown on dissent has been met with the West. A few protests were broken up, and the rally dispersed with Lukashenko still firmly in power. There would be an Ukrainian-style "Orange Revolution" in Minsk this week.

Beneath the surface, however, Lukashenko's grip on power is still as secure as it might appear. President of Belarus since 1994, he has left free to crush democracy and keep his country locked in a Soviet-style war because of his ties to Russia, which had proppped him up with political support, made subsidies and cheap gas. These ties have been cut, as Russia ended energy subsidies and Lukashenko lashed out at the Kremlin.



PROTESTERS were dispersed, but the president has few friends left

Like other leaders who have lost their patron body, Lukashenko now finds himself cutting about for allies. He's reached out to anti-Western Russia and Iran, but Belarus's very geography, squeezed between Russia and the EU, suggests that the country will be forced to make amends with one side or the other. Josu Mariu (Barroso), president of the European Commission, said on Sunday that the EU is ready to enter "full partnership" with Belarus if it reforms.

A terrorist gets out of the Big Haus

BY KIRKCELA ARDELMAN • The most "divergent and evil" woman in Germany, as she was once dubbed by the media, was released from jail last week. Brigitte Mohrhaug, a leader of the Red Army Faction, also known as the *Bremer Kidnapping*—the radical left-wing group that claimed 34 lives, staged bank robberies and kidnappings, and generally held the West German state to ransom throughout the 1970s and early '80s—is now out on parole after serving the maximum 24 years of her life sentences. Finally, she shot the head of Dreschner bank, Jürgen Forster, three times, the gun hidden behind a stack of books.



IN THE 1970s, she was the most evil

And finally, the families of her other victims, campaigned to keep Mohrhaug incarcerated. But for most, her release signals the end of a dark chapter in postwar Germany. "Right-wing people are saying it's wrong," says Hans Georg Ehrhart, deputy head of the Center for European Peace and Security Studies at the University of Hamburg. "But most moderate people are saying, 'Why not? She's had her time in jail, and a very long time for German circumstances.'"

Mohrhaug, 57, who took over as RAF leader after founders Udo Merten and Andreas Baader committed suicide in 1977, served a longer sentence than almost any Nazi war criminal. The former radical, who helped stage the kidnapping and murder of Forster, Wilfried 58 men and leading militant Hans Martin Schleyer, now plans to work as a car designer in Karlsruhe. She may also pursue political, but her political presence. Though she has never expressed remorse, concerns that Mohrhaug will adapt are nil. "She does not believe that the kind of society we are living in is wrong," says Ehrhart, "but there is nothing left [of the RAF]. It has all been destroyed by police." Many former members have successfully assimilated into German life as teachers or writers. Doro Schäfer, the RAF's defense attorney from 1975 until, was the interior minister until 2005. "More problems are the new Islamic terrorists in Germany," says Ehrhart. "This is the main problem people live."

LEAVING CANADA BEHIND

The Canadian diaspora in Asia: an opportunity slowly slipping away

BY ANDREA MANDEL-CAMPBELL • *Adults today, the diasporic headquarters of the world's largest publicly listed Chinese fast-food chain isn't easy to find. Hidden deep in Hong Kong's industrial heartland. Still, it's hard to miss in public life. Café de Corral, a franchise with 300 restaurants in Hong Kong and mainland China, as well as the Midwest U.S. chain in North America. It should be an obvious target for the Canadian food industry, especially since the chairman is, in fact, a Gemack. But made from buying the old pig cooking from Canadian hog producers, Michael Chan, a University of Toronto grad and former businessman who's plumed, says his heart's been laid: not here from his companions. "We would be a natural partner," says the Hong Kong-born Chan. "But for some reason there are badly any among business ties with Canada."*

Café de Corral, when pronounced in Chinese, actually means "come together." Yet it's a celebration of a very different business that could be a potential power base for the booming Chinese market, but has instead become a byword for missed opportunity. While Ottawa tries to show more Canadian interest, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada calculates there are 1.7 million overseas passport holders, equivalent to one percent of Canada's population. Proportionally, it's the world's third-largest diaspora—surpassing even Chinese and Indian—and includes some of Asia's wealthiest and most influential business people. Yet they are in a small, isolated and at times determined, assembly of Canada's potential interest to globalize its economy.

Hong Kong, the mountainous archipelago known for its typhoons and tycoons, is a case in point. An estimated 200,000 to 300,000 Canadians make up the island's single largest

notes David Pung, a Hong Kong-born Vancouver entrepreneur. "But we don't manage to see them to any significant extent."

Take Café de Corral. The chain sources its food globally, importing eggs from the U.S. and beef from Australia, but the Canadian meat processors are not only uncompetitive, says Chan, but unwilling to deliver than product to Asian cuts. "I lived in Alberta, I know the industry," he says. "But for some reason they don't see us in their market." Companies from around the world have packed their food processing resources to the cities, adds Chan, but "I've never heard of a Canadian company coming to us."

And when the diaspora comes calling, the

to wonder why Victor Li failed," says Don DeVries, an immigration specialist at Simon Fraser University. "What blockages do we put in front of these people?"

To many diaspora Chinese the answer is pretty obvious. They are not considered true Canadians. But as many were a fraction of Canada's deep involvement in world China, amplified recently by the Harper government's showdown with Beijing over human rights and its plans to review investments by Chinese into owned companies. "Canada is a relatively small, very senior level," says an individual familiar with the situation who has worked with both Liberal and Conservative governments. "This is not a popular view

born Vancouverites. "There's no loyalty to Canada. Why in the world would we want to give people like that Canadian passports?"

It's a question that's coming up more and more as immigrants, new and old, many of them from mainland China, are learning to join the diaspora. Often it's because they don't really find opportunities in Canada, but the question remains: isn't there some way this media could be used to Canada's advantage? After last summer's hand-to-hand cash, which cost Ottawa at least 100 million to evacuate 15,000 passport holders, Ottawa is reviewing Canada's dual citizenship policy to find out. One thing is for sure, says Andy Wang, who moved to Vancouver at the age of six, and at 24 is back in Hong Kong working for U.S. media outlet Bloomberg. "Canada loses more than it gains."

It's hard to imagine why anybody wouldn't welcome them. But some diaspora entrepreneurs. The Hong Kong-born immigrant to Canada, a diaspora entrepreneur. A former public relations executive who moved to Canada in 1994, he has efforts were never fully embraced. "The first step up with Canada," he says with glib confidence. "It just made me feel as useless—whatever I suggested, there was never any response."

The final straw for Liu came after being named director of the Canadian Business Commission in Beijing in 2006. To replace the federal agency's lobbying budget, Liu shifted out more than \$1,000 a month from his own pocket to wine and dine Chinese officials. But it paid off within months he'd secured a promise from the head of China's tourism bureau—a personal friend of Liu's for 20 years—that Canada would be awarded "approved destination status," opening the floodgates to millions of Chinese tourists. At the time, Asia was the only Western country with the mandate.

Li went back to Ottawa with plans for a 200-person party to celebrate. The CTC balked and told him he could invite 50—a cheap gesture in a country where everything is done on an imperial scale. That "small thinking," as Li calls it, was reinforced by immigration officials at the embassy who argued the CTC could just pay for the U.S. to invite 200 and then open all offices of their Chinese tourists for trips to Niagara Falls. Liu was annoyed. Canada was choosing to pass up an opportunity to look in on its unrivaled reputation in China. "I wanted Canada to do the minimum for me," he says. "They wanted to let us achieve."



ALEX SARK (above) rejected Ray Street's calls. Michael Chan (right) left his job in Hong Kong for convenience of foreign passport holders and Canada's largest cities outside the U.S. Their ranks include a who's who of Hong Kong's rich and powerful, from Victor Li, son of Li Ka-shing, one of the world's richest men, to the family of followed world and jewellery tycoons, Cheng Yung-fai, an anglophile, Huang, the son of Stanley Ho, known as "the king of gambling" and the island's richest man, is also a citizen, while Edmund Ho, Macao's chief executive, is an alumnus of York University. "How many countries value such a proportion of citizens living overseas in such positions of influence?"



OUR COUNTRIES "WOULD BE NATURAL PARTNERS," SAYS MICHAEL CHAN, "BUT FOR SOME REASON THERE ARE HARDLY ANY STRONG BUSINESS TIES WITH CANADA."

out a publication as new, it followed Canadian banks like—on every level and on all sides of the equation."

For some, that ambivalence is, at best, partly overcome. Many Hong Kong passport holders see Canada as a place worth staying for, but not a place to live. They are not a group and access to free health care. While many live in Vancouver around Vancouver, thousands working in Hong Kong claim poverty level incomes in Canada to avoid the tax. "They think Canadians are richer," says Patrick Chan, a Hong Kong

entrepreneur, through his Toronto office looking for financing in Canada, and he realized that could pay for his Chinese contacts into business for his firm. But Chan was too risky for the firm and was asked to leave at the end of 2005. "They had something to do something about it," he says. "So I think out on her own, adding Chinese companies looking for overseas funding and international investment increased in looking into the Chinese market. Now she's consulting for a Chinese-based telecom company based in the U.S., and recently helped broker the company's first private equity deal. She has

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN BIRD AND JAMES MCKENZIE

able place to enter or leave kids, but no heat or insulation. It is left raining many of the negatives of a wide open immigration policy, and little reward. "I don't see any benefits to having a large diaspora," says SFU's DeWitte, who argues an ever-growing expat community devalues the Canadian passport and raises security concerns. Canada also faces a potentially "huge crisis" when elderly passport holders suddenly remember their citizenship, warns Robert Zweig, director of the Center on China's Transnational Relations at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. "All these people have the right to come back to Canada," says Zweig. "Do you know how much it costs to do?"

Canada needs to ensure better integration and more commitment from prospective newcomers, say experts. Suggestions include applying the three-year residency requirement and changing naturalization requirements. Canada should also reform the tax system, which encourages the diaspora to cut ties with Canada in favour of U.S. style tax on worldwide income. But it can't ignore, importantly, Canada needs to act as a resource rather than a write-off, says Zweig.

Rich this would seem to be a perfect case in point. He helps his fingers (as he often does) as he mansuans his alter 3000 from his mansuans restaurant in downtown Beijing to his 100-room Comfort Inn hotel, a five-story building. He's come a long way since producing food from management at Toronto's Ryerson University in 1979 and opening his first hotel in Hainan, Ala. With outdoor night to the U.S. hotel franchise for southern China, has plans to open 25 Comfort Inns across the country by 2000.

A Hong Kong native who immigrated to Canada in 1970 at 16, has encountered his fellow Canadians to make the move to China, but it's tough. Canadian culture like Delta and Sandman Hotels are nowhere to be seen, and while his brings over Canadian hotel industry practices to run his hotel, it's impossible to source and paper or turn his guests into Canadian companies without a local Chinese presence. "If I know of a Canadian man here, I would try to use them. But I don't get a whole lot of connections," says Hui, who just sold his Vancouver restaurant, the Park Pearl. "It's been very easy," he says with a smile. "I just wish I could see more Canadians doing the same or even bigger things." ■

Andrea Mansel Campbell travelled to China in 2006 on a Media Fellowship from the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. She is also the author of the book *Why We Don't Drink Molasses: Raising Children the New from the Side of Global Obscurity*.

Ottawa's auto rebate runs a little rough

BY BARBARA BOHNTON • The *Scotiabank* rebate program, introduced in the federal budget but weak to reward some Canadians for buying new environmentally friendly cars—and penalize others for choosing gas guzzlers—is taking a hit from auto analysts and manufacturers alike. Detroit's DaimlerChrysler, for one, calls the plan a "tax grab," while manufacturers like Toyota, left off the \$400-\$500 credit altogether, say Ottawa's auto industry executives, while showing no appreciable gain for the environment.

For simply, the program promotes rebates of up to \$2,000 for cars that get 6.5 litres per 100 km or less. Inexpensive, a former Toyota Camry has seven out of 17 states listed as eligible for the rebate. As hybrids and the sub-compact Yaris, which boasts 6.4 litres per 100 km. At Hyundai Auto Canada in Markham, Ont., spokesman Tom McPherson points out that his company's Accent gets 6.9 litres per 100 km, but is not eligible for a rebate. "The Accent misses the target number by four-tenths of a litre," McPherson says with exasperation. "Ottawa has provided Toyota with an arbitrary competitive advantage and the environmental benefits just don't seem to be there."

At the other end, the big SUVs favored by suburban soccer moms will be hit with a "green levy" of as much as \$4,000. This will allow that segment's buyers not one but two, DesRosiers says. Those who want bigger cars probably afford bigger, "green levy" or no. What's worse, DesRosiers cautions that the program will cost the feds up to \$5,000 for every move of carbon eliminated—making



THE TOYOTA YARIS: One of 17 models eligible for a green rebate

is one of the most expensive environmental programs in the world.

And for what, he asks. Canadians already buy economical cars—nearly 465,000 (or almost 16 percent) of all new car sales in 2006 were compact and subcompact, so the rebate won't change the picture. "All it is going to do is confuse the heck out of the public," says a Honda dealer in Ontario. ■

Why a few seconds are worth millions

BY JASON KIRBY • Next time you're standing at the Tim Hortons counter jangling for your coffee, take a second to divert the moment. It's about to go the way of the fresh baked Donut. The food chain is set to change the way customers pay for their double donuts, and analysts are already drooling over the money to be made.



TIM HORTONS could reap big sales from new credit cards

Research grabbed their customers to figure out the impact on the chain's sales. "We'll have thought not having to wait through your profits for this last mile could be worth \$50 million."

For starters, the cards will get you in and out faster, shaving up to 10 seconds from the payment time. That may not seem like much, until you consider the restaurant industry rule of thumb holds that every second reduction in service time translates into a one per cent sales gain. By 2009, as people increasingly use credit cards in the U.S., the analysis forecast sales could rise by as much as 10 per cent, simply because the lines move a little faster. But the big bucks will come as customers add an extra dollar or so to their orders, since they are no longer limited by the change falling around in their pockets. This points to studies showing customers spend up to 20 per cent more when using cards to satisfy cravings instead of cash. That suggests Tim Hortons' sales could rise by 15 per cent in 2009, a 199 million gain.

As the analysis says, the new cards have yet to catch on—there are just 18 million of them in use in the U.S., versus 1.5 billion traditional credit cards. But south of the border, big chains like McDonald's and 7-Eleven are testing them, with encouraging results. Polls show nearly one-third of Americans are willing to use the cards. If the same holds true for Canada, customers will always have money for Tim Hortons. ■



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Honda trucks are solid from the inside out. They are built with legendary Honda quality and reliability, so you know they are going to last. Plus, all Honda trucks are built with unibody construction, making them stronger, lighter and smoother to drive than other traditional trucks. And if that's not enough, they are also incredibly fuel efficient and safe. The only question is which Honda truck is best for you?

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Ready for snowy days? The Pilot's available Variable Torque Management™ 4-wheel drive system (VTM-4) and muscular 3.5-liter, VTEC® V-6 engine makes it a smart, naturally athletic SUV. And when it's time to load up, the Pilot offers an impressive 25.7 cubic feet of versatile cargo space. No wonder it has been named Car and Driver's "Best Trucks" for the past six years.

CR-V. The new Honda CR-V was designed with loads of utility. From the 60/40 split, sliding



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Element. If it's adventure you're looking for, you'll find it faster in the Element or the street-styled Element SC. In fact, everything about the Element says "let's go"



From the wide opening side doors and wipe-down utility floor to more than 60 different

seating and cargo configurations – the Element lets you pack more action into your action-packed lifestyle. And with a "5 Star Rating" for Front and Side Impacts from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), all your getaways will be safer ones.

Odyssey. Form, function and more of everything you want in a minivan can be found in the smooth handling Odyssey. There's an available i-VTEC® V-6



engine with Variable Cylinder Management (VCM) so you'll have the power to pass and the fuel efficiency to cruise. And with the impact reducing Advanced Compatibility Engineering (ACE) body structure and "5 Star Rating" for Front and Side Impacts from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there's peace of mind



Ridgeline. It's big. It's powerful. And its unique integrated closed box frame with unibody construction makes it 20 times more rigid than traditional trucks.



It also features a sophisticated Variable Torque Management 4-wheel drive system (VTM-4) that can handle just about anything. It's tow 2268 kg (5000 lb) or hold a 1/2-ton (550 lb) Plus, a dual-action tailgate, lockable In-Bed Trunk and rear seat flip-up cargo area lets you pack more into your weekends. There's even room for a "5-Star Rating" for Front and Side Impacts from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).





AGING SMART: The key factors are improving brain plasticity and the ability to generate new brain cells. Poit's programs work on both.

THE SECRET TO NOT LOSING YOUR MARBLES

For years scientists saw loss of memory and brain function as an inevitable part of aging. Now new studies say a little tinkering can change all that.

BY LIAISON GEORGE • Doris Howard, a 79-year-old former psychologist, has lived in the Heritage Retirement Community—set in a stately Tudor-style brick mansion in San Francisco's Nisqually District—for almost seven years. For talking and gossamerously glibly, Howard is what the staff call a high-energy resident, a dedicated community volunteer, member of the art committee, an avid reader, and editor of the in-house newsletter, *Maple Springs*. (In fact, she tells me, the lastly has been so eager to see me for this interview.) Which is why she was so surprised, a few years ago, when she began to notice she was forgetting little things. “Short-term memory was my

biggest problem,” she says. “That’s the first thing that goes. I had to become a complete list-maker.”

Last spring, representatives from a local technology company called Poit Science came to the Heritage to see if any of the residents were interested in trying out a revolutionary computer-based program that could potentially rewire their brains. “They said if we take this eight-week course, one hour a day, five days a week, we would learn to listen better, pay more attention, and release brain fog,” says Howard. “It really worked wonderful.” A few weeks in, she began to notice small improvements. For one thing,

she was no longer jumping out of bed at night to write something down for fear she would forget it. “I knew that if I thought of it while I was going to sleep,” she says, “I would remember to do it the next day.”

Also, her reading experience began to change. Before, when she would return a book she’d been reading, she would return it to the back to remind herself who all of the characters were and how they were connected. “After, I would take all of the names straight in my head,” she says. “When I’d think ‘who was that?’ I’d take a moment and I’d remember.”

But Howard’s transformation came months after the grand finale from the program. It was time to see how her driver’s license, and she was nervous the last time she’d had to take the written test. Five years earlier, she’d failed it twice. “This time when I was studying it, I saw very clearly that I was recognizing all

the details you don’t normally remember,” she says, referring to all of the signage and tricky rules of the road. “I was remembering things much better than I did when I was only 76.” In just eight weeks—with no pills, no coaching or direct instruction, and no intercity airplanes—the Poit Science Brain Training program had literally shaved years off Doris Howard’s brain age.

Time, it sounds like something that might be advertised with a fine set of Gauss knives for the Poit Science program in the result of decades of neurological research conducted by some of the world’s leading brain scientists. Poit’s chief scientific officer, Dr. Michael Maranzich, is a pioneer of neurophysiology who helped invent the cochlear ear implant. He leads a team of 50 brain scientists from top universities around the

world, including Yale, Cambridge, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in developing new cognitive training programs to reverse age-related cognitive decline. Poit’s mandate, as a slogan tells it, is to “inspired brain sports to match Marzan.” To date, the company has set up brain fitness centers like the one at the Heritage in roughly 40 retirement homes across the U.S. and at one each facility in British Columbia. Early clinical trials are showing that its program

reverses the cognitive effects of spending an average of 10 years, and some times much more. Poit’s initial focus has been on adults over the age of 60. Ultimately, however, company executives expect their market to expand to include age-specific brain fitness in their late 40s and 50s looking to fight early signs of memory loss. “We asked, ‘What if we can take a 55-year-old and give her the processing speed of a 30-year-old?’” says Poit’s CEO Jeff Zimmerman. “Well, now I’m taking the ‘50’ off.”

WITH THE MEGAGENERATION coming forward, it’s no, the concept of brain fitness could not have materialized so soon, if only because memory is undeniably among the most powerful economic engines driving the 21st century. Boomer’s cognitive decline of their own direct, of relinquishing cultural and economic dominance, has long sustained the beauty industry, the physical fitness of aging, and the cosmetic surgery industry, not to mention dozens of other industries that feature down of Doris Howard’s brain loss or Madonna’s inconspicuously decrepit hands and sell the best of your whole life.

But while Botox and Restylane can keep skin taut and lips plump in perpetuity, on the inside, brains are torn turning 50 at a rate of one every 75 seconds. On Jan. 1, 2006, the first Boomer turned 60. Over the next two decades, 77 million more will follow. And what they’ll find is that, like it or not, their mental machinery will slow down and simplify. Their brains will curtail on producing important chemicals. They’ll be less likely to engage their minds in new, challenging ways. And they’ll start to forget little things. Like where they left their car keys, or the name of their new dining room table, or why they came to the grocery store in the first place.

“We have a horrible situation now where we’ve figured out how to prolong the health of the body without prolonging the health of the mind,” says Maranzich, from his San



RIGHT NOW, IF YOU’RE 65, THERE’S A 50-50 CHANCE THAT YOU’LL ONE DAY BE IDENTIFIED AS SENILE*

Francisco office. “Right now, if you’ve passed your 65th birthday, there’s almost a 50-50 chance you’ll eventually be identified as senile. And if you’re not, there’s a pretty good chance you’ll be so surprised that you can’t really take care of yourself. So we have longevity, but the end is crap.”

Compounding this anxiety is the fact that boomers’ parents are living longer than any generation ever has—well into their 80s and 90s—making boomers the first cohort to witness that cognitive decline in such large numbers. An estimated 33 percent of people over 65 have mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and every year, roughly one fifth of those are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. By 2010, according to the Alzheimer’s Association, nearly eight million adults will suffer from the disease in the U.S. alone.

Meanwhile, there aren’t enough research and development dollars to support baby boomers in their retirement. To maintain the standard of living to which they’ve become accustomed, many will have to keep working indefinitely. And they’ll need to find ways to keep themselves mentally agile as they compete against ever younger people in ever more complex workplaces. “Baby boomers pride themselves on creating new paradigms for each new life stage, and old age won’t be any different,” says Zimmerman. “We’re a generation that grew up with Sputnik. Some of us were on the front edge of computers. So we have a belief in the ability of technology to make our lives better.” And yet it would have a significant advantage if the clock could tick at the speed of someone in his 30s, he says. “With all the industry knowledge that’s been gained in 10 years in the industry, that’s who I’d bet on to compete with any young techies you want to show me.”

And what science would have it, a great deal of attention has been focused on the matter. The 90s was devoted the decline of the brain by the George H.W. Bush administration, and billions of funding dollars were poured into brain research. “We saw the advent of brain imaging technologies like MRI and CAT scans,” says Zimmerman. “In short, we learned a great deal about how we learn.” It has changed the way we think about the brain and, sure, it’s an overall answer hope for the future prospect of aging.

Until now, the brain fitness industry, such as it is, has amounted to a mishmash of products and services that promise to build up

the brain like muscle. There are bestselling Sudoku puzzles, crossword, and dozens of brain-related self-help books. The Memory Bible, *Amnesia Survival Strategy* by Roger Stone, Brian Strong and Get Your Brain in the Fast Lane. Pharmaceuticals carry vitamin supplements and herbal concoctions with names like “Mind Power” and “Deep Thought” specifically for elderly consumers. The “gray program” on late-night talk shows, *Memory’s Brain Age*, which makes no scientific claims but promises to “keep people’s minds active with fun mental workouts,” has sold millions of copies worldwide. Sony, Sega and Bandai all have brain software in the works.

But the average person’s understanding of brain science and memory at best, and sales of these products—much like expensive skin cream—can’t do anything by hype on a grand

side. Neuroscientists are now saying that exercise, diet, brain scans and video games like Nintendo—while certainly helpful—are not enough. “There must be more to it, and that increases blood flow to the brain,” says Zimmerman. “But standing on your head increases blood flow to the brain. We’re looking for a little bit more than that.”

All of them said, it’s how you use your brain that counts. “The brain isn’t just a muscle that you pump up,” says Donald Stuss, a University of Toronto professor and neuropsychologist with the Baycrest Research Centre for Aging and the Brain. “It’s a series of processes which you can adapt and learn. You can teach the brain to do things efficiently.” Stuss and his colleagues recently developed their own rehabilitation program designed to help older adults fight cognitive decline by teaching them to think efficiently. The results of their clinical trials were published in the January 2007 issue of the *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*. Participants showed “significant improvement” in memory, spatial task planning and psychosocial function—a finding with implications that are nothing less than revolutionary.

It needs to be held as a cliché among neurology experts that the brain was plastic, or malleable, in our infancy; after that, its infrastructure was set. “Within the last five to 10 years, I used to teach—we used to teach—that when you’re older, your brain is finished, kaput,” says Stuss. “[This idea] was actually the basis of a Nobel Prize that was awarded to two scientists from Harvard—David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel—and it was largely borne out,” says Merzenich. “Their notion was that the brain developed into mature functionality by the end of the critical period and beyond that period, it was like a computer—every neuron knew what to do.” A person had a finite number of brain cells and once they were gone, they were gone. But if this were true, says Merzenich, how do you account for learning? “You can learn to play the piano if you’re 70 if you really want to, through driving your brain to make that shift. The brain is plastic throughout a lifetime. You never lose your ability to acquire ability.”

This lifelong ability to adapt, called brain plasticity, and the ability to generate new brain cells, called neurogenesis, are now heralded as the twin pillars of aging smart. Research conducted by Merzenich and others in the ‘80s and ‘90s was among the first to prove that brains in elderly studies, they observed the deceleration of aging rates. “They gradually lost their ability to control their paws,” says Merzenich. “They struggled to feed themselves by manipulating food and ultimately, they lost control of their heads, dragging them around.” Using brain imaging

technologies, scientists found that part of the problem was the poor quality of sensory information the rats were receiving as they aged. When the rats were shown to perform certain activities in particular order and order, Merzenich and his colleagues found they could help them compensate their motor skills and prolong their lives by 15 to 20 per cent. “The rats didn’t lose their mobility for an extra three months,” says Merzenich. “And when you looked inside the brain of the rat, you had actually restored substantially the quality of information that was coming from the paw. The point is, these kind of experiences demonstrated that you



NINTENDO MAY INCREASE BLOOD FLOW TO THE BRAIN—BUT SO DO HEADSTANDS. WE NEED MORE.

could make these very old brains—rats, not humans of course—and you could live them to learn things and acquire new skills.”

IN THE MID-’90s, neurologists began exploring the possibility of developing brain plasticity in people. Dr. Richard Frackowiak, a professor of cognitive neurology at the Institute of Neurology, University College London (and a member of Pope John’s scientific advisory board), studied the brains of London taxi drivers. He found that because of the rigorous nature of the training they must complete, known as *The Knowledge*, before they’re permitted to drive one of London’s iconic black cabs, Cuban taxi drivers spend roughly two years learning 120 routes, which encompass about 15,000 streets within a 10-kilometre radius. Frackowiak theorized that these extensive, specialized navigational experiences would render their brains structurally different from an average person’s. He was right: In the cabbie group, the posterior hippocampus—the long ridges embedded in each cerebral hemisphere—were significantly larger due to the control group. He concluded that the hippocampus plays a specific role in spatial memory and that the brains of London cabbies had literally changed shape as a

result of their focused mental activity.

Around the same time, Merzenich decided to take what he’d learned about brain plasticity in the lab and develop programs that that could be useful to people. In 1996, he co-founded a company called Scientific Learning in Oakland, Calif., through which he developed brain training programs for older children with learning disabilities. The key to helping such kids read and learn, he determined, was to identify the flows in how they’re receiving information and correct them. The programs focused on how the brain processes sound, since the majority of the crucial information we consume daily is

delivered through speech. Merzenich figured that kids’ brains could become more sound in a higher-quality form, so would improve the speed with which the information was processed and the quality with which it was learned as the child’s memory.

By way of example, not because the example child born with sickle cell disease. Forty years ago, he says, this condition was not uncommon and it was terribly depressing. “You knew that child had lowered intelligence,” he says. “You knew that child would never have normal speech and you knew that child would struggle to learn to read.” Today, sickle cell isn’t just a curse, but the notion that a child with this condition will automatically have learning disabilities has disappeared. “Turns out, it wasn’t inherent at all,” he says. “Turns out that if you fix it early enough, none of that happens. How could that be?” A really simple way to think about it, he says, is that when you have a cleft palate, your auditory system is blocked by fluids—in the womb and in life, it’s all underwater. “What that means,” he says, “is that your native language is not English. Your native language is noisy English or muffled English. So this poor kid has to develop a construction of their native language on the basis of that crap.” When

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'WE'RE JUST REGULAR GUYS FROM A NORMAL FAMILY, ONE THAT'S ALSO PRETTY AMAZING'
—TEST-TUBE BABY **COLIN RANKIN**, SPEAKING ABOUT HIS AND HIS TWIN BROTHER'S 25TH BIRTHDAY

KELLY SCOTT
CANADA'S CURLERS
THE EARTH MOVED

Durkheim's Canadian women's championship team and her teammates are going to spend last year's disappointment in the place first in the world championships. With few fans and no family to cheer them at their first title in Aomori, Japan. "It was just the challenge of going home as a runner," said shop owner. They stressed paid off. They traveled through the road in which you get with each one less. Ignoring a 30-magnitude earthquake the morning of the championship game, Scott's brother led the team to mark 16 to win Canada's first world title since Colleen Jones's victory in 1984. With the victory came a unique honor—Scott's thirdly gold in history to win both the world and Olympic titles in the same event, which championed him in 1992 and 1994. Sheer grace, it followed, B.C.'s Scott, and her teammates have a long-term goal to defend their world title over a 14-month period will be met up the road in Vernon.



DUNCAN BROWN
GAMING CHIEF HOLDS
LOSING TICKET

CIO of the Ontario Teachers' and Gannett Co., Inc., **Brown** had been "compromised by public inquiries as a 'first class call boy,'" but last week he was accused at Queen's Park would seek to defame a growing scandal at the agency. Last year, after the CIO reported false retail sales figures, Brown was seen wearing his signature frequency, Glenora's comb-over.

André Martin issued a probe. His report, released Monday, found those who were ever so "guilty" "incurred fraudsters," accusing retail retailers and others, had accepted \$1 million in wire transfers. "The system has been cheated," Martin said. He accused the CIO, under Brown, of using profit ahead of ethics and growing violent allegations. At an October dinner looking at the McGowan government, **Brown** told it was his duty to defend community. But he was too much of a politician to do so. He had long ago been made to feel by his department may not be the end of the issue. Martin is recommended that an independent regulatory step in to oversee the CIO.



ZSUZSA DEMCSAK
ARROGANCE
IN DISCREET

On Monday, Hungary's Social and Economic Affairs minister Zsolt Pozsgay, 28, an newly appointed spokesman, said before the start of its search for help that she's a former beauty model who visited Hungary because she prefers G-string to thong; that wanted a score from her last partner; it was her husband's "blagging." Domokos complained in his blog about how the child died in her child's day-care center. He'd live up to his standards. She agreed that one will choose you had been brought in by a doctor's mother. That government minister visited dry eye system is a source of pride for Hungarians. Their governments are Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány said Monday for you admitting his government had led about the perilous state of the economy. The governments and his system are the same. He said that violent protests. He's being an underdog, arrogant, coward, or wasn't the best response.



**CENSHIRO
KAWAMOTO**
LOW-INCOME MANSIONS

[illegible]COLIN AND
GREGORY RANKIN
TEXTURE MEN

Despite the history they made up by lying, *Coils* and Gregory Raskin, married their 25th birthday Sunday with little ado. In 1992, the fraternal twins became the first rare rubin babies in Canada. Rejuvenated, hard-eyed *Coils*, who manages a residence at the University of Manitoba, spent Sunday recovering from a night out with friends. He also enjoyed a rare phrase out of blood, blue-eyed brother Greg, who's been backpacking through Central American states. *Coils* looks lively, also under a few more pounds than his twin Ian and Charlie, though the help of a British doctor, Prof. Peter Steptoe, the only in-vitro specialist at the time, as a last resort. Their "enzyme babies," as the Raskins called them, were seriously concerned in a petting zoo in England and later born in a hospital in Didsbury, one. The Raskins acknowledge that media attention is the cause: medical researchers. The twist being most Coils of their own accord, and *Coils* says he appears to be a bit of a snigger to his own regular baby," he says, "from a normal family, one that's not



ELIZABETH EDWARDS
TOUCHING IT OUT

in close to hours of hospital treatment. His Wednesday follow-up showed Edwards, with all American Democratic presidential hopefuls, John Edwards, gave the family what she described as "a breast cancer was bad news, having spread to the bone, including one of my sister's hips" on her flight 52, was made known that her husband's campaign for the White House would continue. She declared, "I don't want my leg amputated but I pulled away from my mother to be president out of the race." Days later she received a standing ovation as her first solo appearance since the diagnosis. Though critics worry about the effect her decision will have on their children, it's clear that the Edwardses will choose to spend family time where will may be during his tenure. Elizabeth is confident about her announcement: "Either you push forward with the things you're steeing. The secret to be your only choice."



IAN PAISLEY
NORTHERN IRELAND'S
DR. NO SAYS YES

[illegible]

FRANK STRONACH
PARTS DON'T ADD UP
TO CHRYSLER'S WHOLE

The king of auto parts has been doing meetings lately, including one in the city of Detroit. Magna's chief executive, Bert Hagemann, Magna International chairman **Frank Stronach**, 74, was announced as replacing the gone-with-the-wind Chrysler. Toyota's tight-spined **Magna** chief, **Andreas** **Wegmann**, is expected to take over the bankrupt Stronach. Magna's growth came from auto parts growth, not from being a car maker. It's interesting to know that high energy, car parts assembly was the main reason why Volkswagen wanted to get out of Chrysler and into cars. The Chrysler is under way to get in the U.S. market, not with a tag for Stronach to do it alone. It's a real live Magna-powers to say it is successful. Stronach will probably end up as a minority stake, and not the control he has used to get performed. And despite long experience making parts and even assembling whole vehicles as an Austrian plant, Magna has no background in doing itself to the public and the wrestling deals. How the king of auto parts understands a company he can't win.



THE BACK PAGES

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tv

At David Chase's The Sopranos ends its run—the last batch of new episodes starts April 8 on The Movie Network—straight away. Like the TV industry here's turned much from one of its most respected shows. Since it premiered in 1999, Chase's creation has been rated for its dark humor (one upcoming scene has Tony Soprano using a switchblade gun to trim the branches) and strong characterizations; today, most other drama shows are basically homages and depend more on procedurals than characters. But look a little closer: there are many things about The Sopranos that have become part of the business. Just not necessarily the things that make the show worth watching.

In particular, the TV business has fallen in love with Chase's use of shock tactics, of gonzoism that was the subject and have been others about in the next day. After Backyard, a friend of Chase's who has written three books about The Sopranos (as well as the new memoir The Last Seat on the Plane: How I Made It), points out that The Sopranos has popularized the art of sudden death, of killing off characters just in shock. "For characters to come in for one season or two seasons, and die a violent death, has been a hallmark of the show," Backyard explains. "When Big Pussy died, it was shocking, because no one had ever seen a show where a major character was eliminated at the end of season two."

The Sopranos wasn't the only show that tried to do this, the other big cult hit of 1999, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, devoted off characters left and right. But Buffy, because it was a teen fantasy show, was never particularly respected in the old industry. The Sopranos was another story. When David Chase killed off people, characters conceptually, other producers took notice. Networks' unspoken elimination of major characters in itself became an expected part of series TV. Last year, about which character on Lost or Battlestar Galactica will die or burn out to be a Cylon. Other shows may have done what The Sopranos did, but Chase injected these ideas into the mainstream of the business.

Part of the reason other producers use Chase is that he represents the dawn of reality television writers. He's the "combustible" writer who finally got to do some

How the Sopranos shot up TV



On the eve of its final season, JAIME J. WEINMAN looks at the legacy of one of the industry's most respected shows



thing revolutionary. Chase's previous work had mostly been for mainstream networks: shows like *Seinfeld*, *The Night Stalker*, and, more memorably, *The Rockford Files*, where he wrote and produced many of the best episodes.

But Chase was always looking to create a great rock show. Rockford creator Stephen J. Cannell (*The A-Team*, *Wings*) recalls that when Chase was plotting a *Rockford* story for another season, he was so fascinated with the

low-life past character I would be mobsters from New Jersey) that he started on writing it himself. "He said 'You gotta let me write this. This is my meat.' So we gave it to him, and of course he wrote it better than any of us could." Cannell says.

When Chase wanted to switch to a more serious, character-driven series, the networks famously balked at *The Sopranos*, not just because of the content but because the lead character had to be a fat, middle-aged guy. "He had written it for Fox or NBC," Cannell explains, "and when they said it, they wanted to cast an 8-foot glower, a 15-year-old hot-looking guy to play Tony Soprano. They were trying to apply the classic leading-man rules to Tony." Finally, Chase talked to HBO, the pay cable network that was looking for something different.

The narrative that the move created—an experienced producer who can control his vision only by going to cable—has become the model for new cable TV series in the post-Sopranos era. Chase, the producer had an idea that the broadcast networks considered too far out or too dark, he would network it and it was something the networks would accept. But after *The Sopranos* turned, David Chase's reputation didn't last a year, these were producers suddenly had another option: they could go to HBO's founder Chris Albrecht with that same idea, and he might buy it just on the basis of the producer's name or experience.

So David Milch, creator of *NYPD Blue*, could sell HBO a show, *Deadwood*, knowing that HBO wanted him on its roster. After his success in voicing Chase, the mainstream success of HBO became, almost exclusively, to bring in young producers with a lot of network TV experience. Backyard says: "The success of the Sopranos brought a lot of new writers to HBO. You see how David Chase was treated? You think 'My God, they'll do any show!'"

DAVID CHASE (LEFT), creator and producer of *The Sopranos*; SCENES FROM *The Last Seat* (top) and in scenes 1 and 2

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HANCOCK/OUTLINE; THE LAST SEAT: CHASE/NEW ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS



UNDERCOVER: Berry plays a journalist in *Perfect Stranger*, which tests into the fray that evoked the typing is the new unprotected sex

Telling secrets to a perfect stranger

Halle Berry talks about her online identities, dangerous liaisons, and childhood demons

WYNNANE JENNIFER—As I talk to Berry deep into the movie for *Perfect Stranger*, she's misled by the three women who don't sound like her: blonde, freckled, friendly, amiable. One grins a comb through her hair, newly long and straight. Another darts a Q-tip around her nostrils, and a third runs a lint roller up and down her black suede jacket. Berry looks straight ahead, like a boxer between rounds, her dark eyes lost in whatever private thoughts a star uses to amuse herself while waiting to induce the camera.

In Toronto to promote *Perfect Stranger*, a thriller about online seduction, this former beauty queen, Oscar-winning actress, Bond girl, *Condom*, and now *Twelve* spokeswoman seems to enjoy the effort her beauty has on perfect strangers. She will flatter photographer with her gaze. She will land on the cover of a daily tabloid by receding a three-year-old scandal but about her husband's threats in *Twelve* to work up the nerve to be made in *Monster's Ball*. And she will admit to her own moments—her alcoholic father, her hatred of men, her love of women, flirtations with suicide, and an ex (*Wicker Park*) whose life she almost lost in one act.

But she knows where to draw the line. "This dance that we do, it's part of our job," says Berry, sitting on a couch in a discreet distance from me. "When is enough enough? Do I give up everything about me? No way. But I've been pretty open about lots of things that could have remained private and probably should have remained private." Those things, along with real insight into *Perfect Stranger*, now roll through cyberspace in permanent orbit which lets us up to the subject at hand: how the Internet offers false promises of intimacy, privacy and identity, and how this hide-and-

seek nature has become a not-so-quiet hangout of the world's worst kept secrets.

That's the setting for *Perfect Stranger*, in which Berry plays Rosemary, a Manhattan newspaper reporter who goes undercover to seduce, and entrap, an advertising mogul who likes to form dangerous liaisons online (Bruce Willis). He's suspected of killing one of his colleagues, so even Rosemary has known since childhood. What's news about this formula thriller is how the reporter corners her prey—by assuming one she's got her act on his office laptop, and another to engage him in erotic chat online. In a world where casual exchanges keep surfacing as evidence of illicit trysts—francophonism to *stomatoes*—*Perfect Stranger* taps into the fear that overheard typing in the now unprotected sex.

But the Internet is also the one place a celeb can chat up strangers without being recognized, so it seems fair to ask if Berry preys cyberspace innocents. "I go into a lot of chat rooms," always. "Usually anonymously. I'm discrete, so I go into a lot of medical chat rooms. When I understand of the chat room I go in as myself. If I'm just going in to get some hard-core information and hear what people are really talking about, I usually go in as somebody else."

Berry, 40, who's now doing 31-year-old *Queen Bees* (Gail) Aubrey says she doesn't

seek out seduction online, and "I don't look in my computer for sex." But she did cruise chatrooms for years. go, "I thought, 'Well, I'm going to and have some anonymity and be somebody else and have a real conversation.' But what I quickly realized was that if I'm pretending to be somebody else, what makes me think that the other person is really who they are? What kind of conversation are we really having—two people pretending to be what they're not? It felt creepy."

Isn't that just like acting? "But that's what I do in the realm of my job," she says. "I know what I'm getting out of it. Every movie I go through a creative experience where I learn something about myself." In *Perfect Stranger*, she goes to play a journalist, and "I wanted to be a journalist before I became an actor," she explains, choosing that she will wonder if she found the right choice. Berry also shares a lot of times with her character, who's seemed by moments of a violent father. "Most people have demons they spend their life trying to exorcise. I used to think I would go so far to exorcise mine. But after studying that movie, I realized, if it was in the vein of self-protection, I might go a lot further than I think I'm capable of." Demons? "There are demons I fight with. There are things I know that a kid shouldn't have known or."

Asked to elaborate, Berry smiles. "If I tell you, I'm gonna have to kill you." "Now that would be a good story." "But I'm going to write it, not you." ■

WE'RE STALKING HEATHER HILLS

Paul McCrory's *entire* first ex has taken that act: the one about whether her artificial leg will fit all while she's performing on Dancing with the Stars. She told a talk-show host: "Everyone's betting on it, so I've made a bet too. I've bet a few hundred dollars it's not going to come off!" Hills says she's wearing a special wrap. To demonstrate, she's performed several high kicks with the prosthetic, which swiveled reliably on board.



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SOMETHING TO Think about when composing e-mail: Most co-workers can read Times New Roman font size 12 from six feet away

The rules for cubicle dwellers

How to talk on the phone, lie about being contagious, and lose the 'office lamprey'

BY JULIA MCKINNEIL • Working in a cubicle is like being stuck in an elevator, where cubicle dweller James Thompson, author of *The Cubicle Survival Guide*, an advice book for the millions of North Americans trapped in office cubicles. "You have to access the situation, assess the people you are with," he says. "You might not like the state of affairs but given the reality, you must not only learn to like, but to trust the people you are with."

Among the top tips to master is phone etiquette. "Don't think your colleagues aren't paying attention to your phone conversation, they are." To this end, never whisper, says Thompson, who works at a TV station in Washington. "Just as speaking a foreign language for extended periods makes others speculate as to what is being discussed, nothing creates an air of gossip more than white noise." If you have to talk to your doctor, respond with one word answers, he advises. Don't discuss diseases by name. "Your colleagues do not want to overhear you've contracted an HIV virus between your toes."

If on the phone with a loved one, a quick "I love you" is acceptable when hanging up, Thompson says, but a prolonged "I love you" is an effusive expression of emotion making amazement that someone in the world actually cares about you. "As for cell phones, don't leave, but a prolonged 'I love you' is an effusive expression of emotion making amazement that someone in the world actually cares about you. "As for cell phones, don't leave, but a prolonged 'I love you' is an effusive expression of emotion making amazement that someone in the world actually cares about you."

However, body dysmorphia, and calling in sick are all parts of cubicle life, and have their own subset of rules. "There goes your first order to save up sick days for vacation, you

may have to go to work on days when you're actually sick. Your colleagues know this game but they also know when people are lying on the edge of resignation. Try to characterize your understandable symptoms—sneezing, coughing, runny nose—as somehow work-related. Tell colleagues you're stressed about work and didn't sleep well, he says.

Drinking constantly when no work is coming in with a broken lamp or black eye begging the question "What happened?", proper cubicle etiquette dictates that no "discarded person's" duty to use all inspiring words at ease. "This is an unconscious rejection of the answer with eyes, always Thompson.

For cubicle dwellers, eating, drinking and digesting is super-important business. "Although your colleagues understand you're tired to eat at your cubicle, they don't appreciate eating food that makes them hungry, irritated or mischievous." Bread is a smart option, he says. Bread doesn't smell or make noise. Thompson also recommends "old school cheese," meaning cheese that was popular more than 10 years ago, like American, which has little smell. Sandwiches are permissible if they are quiet and odorless.

Further caveat do not include don't take your shoes off. "No body really knows what really people are thinking. Do they know they smell and just don't care? Or do they

not know they smell?" Spray deodorant and aerosol deodorants are the best combats against somebody else's body odour.

To lose the "office lamprey" who's always trying to make instant conversation, play "inconspicuous chair mechanic," suggests Thompson. "Obsess over your chair. Start tinkering with it, loosening and reknitting, and spinning around in circles. You're not being disrespectful, you're preoccupied. Constant making adjustments and the uncomfortable nature decides you're not worth the time." With no direct vision, however, be prepared to discuss any scratch you bring in from home. Power cords are always wise decor choice for cubicles, but if you talk excessively to friends from Maine and Istanbul, be prepared to talk lobster rolls and the Middle East.

A quick note on screen time: since they're an offshoot of your personality, have to avoid images of handbags, shot glasses and erotica. Something that is to people "lost mountain ranges" or "My puppy wishes Enid's" is a suitable corporate choice, says Thompson. Aisle privacy, when composing personal e-mail, most co-workers cannot Times New Roman font size 12 from six feet away. Thompson recommends font size 10 or smaller.

Finally, when a screen proudly ending conversation you wouldn't be looking at, Thompson goes for the "CTRL-W" over "widerly recognized power click of the mouse." CTRL-W is accidentally invisible, he says, and takes little time to master. ■



MOST IMPROVED GIMMICK

This reporter has rounded himself from post-mental funk to protect his daughter following weeks of insults from his former wife, Kim Mathers. Enidom has Med a motion asking a Manhattan court to prevent Mathers from making "disparaging remarks," arguing that his treatment of his 11-year-old daughter, Halle, Mathers has been causing him for weeks in interviews, saying she wants her mother's abuse to be a habit, his aunt and that he's poorly endowed

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The Secret revealed: Ask and it will be given



SCOTT FESCHUK

Not to rub it in your face or anything, but I am sure every aspirer to you as a human being... for I am sure... the Secret Wealth, fame, a trim waistline and Naomi Watts as a French maid's outfit are on their way to me. Up yours, kid! Who's got who by the short hair now!

The Secret is a very popular self-help book that claims to detail an ancient philosophy of living. Having involved the whole nine minutes required to read it, and four more minutes to file a broadly leant on behalf of the English language, I can tell you that the Secret harnesses the raw power of post-ive thinking and exclamation marks! It tells us that the key to a happy and prosperous life is politely asking "the Universe" for a happy and prosperous life, please. "When you think about what you want," author Rhonda Byrne explains "you create the energy of what you want to vibrant at that frequency and you bring it to You!" At last, an explanation for why holed-in starbuck when they walk by. Charlie Sheen's house.

But simply, the Secret of The Secret is that thinking about stuff is the best way to get stuff. But even more simply, "Your thoughts become things!" "It's that simple!" for me and have grown weary of self-help books that rely on me actually doing something, like a with my arm, and usually involving getting up off a

Nothing is impossible is demanded of us by the Secret. "All you require is you and your ability to think things into being!" According to the Secret, every misfortune in your life is something that you attracted with negative thinking. "Often when people first hear this part of the Secret, they react even in horror when masses of lives were lost, and they find it inconceivable that so many people could have attracted themselves to the event." But they did, the author says. Silly Jew! If only they'd resolved to think happy

thoughts during the war. Swiftly, many people still focus on what they "don't want" with violence, hate, a Secret Corner center rearrange. This has led to a "don't want" epidemic: "an epidemic worse than any plague that has befallen humankind ever seen." You can see the author's point: the relentless swelling of the grim, leading first to the wailing of you and blood and then, inexorably, to a painful death leaves the bereaved plague a distant second to anyone's fears of a Water world sequel.

You've got to think positive thoughts, people! If you call the Universe that you don't want the flu, the Universe hears that you do want the flu. The Universe doesn't understand "don't" or "no," Byrne writes. Think of the Universe as a being that boy, but with slightly more money.

The Secret can make you rich if you get your hands on a plentiful supply of money-printing presses. Oh, it can also cure all terrestrial diseases, which is handy.

Money! Fame! All by harnessing the power of positive thinking and exclamation marks!

Gaining wealth is as easy as creating a cheque amount in the mail. Landing the perfect mate is as simple as making room in your closet for his or her clothes. As for your health—well, the good news is that " illness cannot exist in a body that has harmonious thoughts." Series all you cancer victims right for being such doers!

Now, I admit I was skeptical at first about the Secret. When I was growing up, I thought night after night about having hot awesome sex with Marie Osmond. I yearned for it, dreamed of it, wanted it, but I ended up disappointed—having sex with her turned out to be so-so at best.

Also, my dear friend, the Secret writes and the author offers completely authoritative. Examples, some of which are her names and everything! Take "Nauman," for example. He was apparently diagnosed with an "incurable" disease and told he had just a few months to live. So he spent the next three months watching Hollywood movies non-stop. "The disease left his body in those three months." The obvious lesson: even cancer can't overcome some dose of Rob Schneider.

And then there's Robert, a homosexual man who was the subject of disgusting slash

and gay-baiting until he started "emitting a different frequency out into the Universe." Hey, gay people: remember that the next time you're being physically assaulted for your sexual orientation. It's not the homophobic and violent criminals who are to blame, it's your attitude! Buck up, already! God made you love musical theaters for a reason.

Self not convinced? Well, consider that the author completely cared her own poor eye right by simply dictating to herself, "I can see clearly." Plus, she says she weighs 116 pounds, yet can whenever and whenever she wants. "If someone is overweight, it must come from thinking 'fat thoughts'... Food is not responsible for putting on weight."

So don't put off the Secret for two whole millenniums. And look at me: I'm due per my debt and faster than ever! Haha, and I don't remember asking the Universe for these belators. Excuse me for a moment, won't you? I've got to go think really hard about an author being struck by a falling piano. ■

ON THE WEB: For Scott Feschuk's take on the news of the day, visit his website www.madness.ca/feschuk

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SUKHWINDER KAUR PUNIA

1962-2007

She left a peaceful farm for the promise of a better life and a reunion with her daughter

Sukhwinder Kaur Punia, nee Eltes, was born on Aug. 31, 1962, in the tiny village of Jalandhar in India's Punjab state. She was the second of three children born to Mohan and Nandini Eltes. Quiet and reserved, Sukhwinder was also a quick study, and attended the local, coed public school, finishing Grade 10. At home, she learned to cook traditional foods: paneer roti, a spicy sabji made from peas and carrots, and dal. Soon, she was ready to run her own home.

At 18, Sukhwinder married Darshan Singh Punia. It was an arranged match. According to Sikh tradition, she left her childhood home to live with her family in Ludhiana. The Punias were landowners and Darshan had his younger brother Amar had inherited 20 acres. Although Sukhwinder missed her adored younger brother, Jagjit, within a year she had a child of her own, a girl named Margreet. Soon, she bore another daughter, Jazmin, then a son, Mianir.

Every morning, Sukhwinder rose before dawn to prepare the breakfast dishes, arhar, flat whole wheat bread. The morning was an even pace: Sukhwinder looked after house-hold matters while Darshan took responsibility for the rice and corn crops. Her tightly knit family was happy and comfortable. Except during monsoon season, it was dry in Ludhiana, and Sukhwinder would often nap through the worst of the afternoon heat that sometimes topped 41°C.

In 2007, her beautiful eldest daughter Margreet, then 18, married Rajinder Laddha and emigrated to Abbotsford, B.C., a middle-class suburban city in the Fraser Valley, to join his family. Leaving her daughter go off to Canada at such a young age tore at Sukhwinder's heart. Before leaving India, Rajinder pledged to sponsor the Punia for immigration once he was established in a job. His words held a long promise. Upward mobility remains audaciously difficult in the Punjab. Most importantly, the Punia could be reunited in Canada, where, they thought, the children were certain of a better future. Five months ago, the family left the familiarity of the Punjab's mango-kissed fields for Abbotsford.

Sukhwinder arrived at Vancouver International Airport on Oct.

12, wearing hoop earrings, a matching gold chain and a sky-blue shawl kurawi, a long tunic over baggy pants tapered at the ankles. Margreet met her parents at the airport. It was the happiest day of Sukhwinder's life, says Jagjit Sandhu, another relative. They moved into the Laddhas' two-storey brick home in Southern Heights, an Abbotsford suburban where, on the driveway, some of their neighbours stored RVs and aluminium boats.

With her surroundings were unfamiliar, the most jarring change from the quiet Punjab village life was the rapid importance of time in Canada. Darshan left for work in a single packet at a nearby mill exactly at 6:30 a.m.; children went to his job at a bakery in neighbouring Aldergrove at 7:30, and their daughter left for an Abbotsford beauty parlor at 10. Staring alone by the tiled, dark alcove by the front door, Sukhwinder would wave good-bye to each one, in turn, and they'd disappear from sight.

On March 4, a local labour contractor offered Sukhwinder a minimum-wage job of her own: painting wooden, hedges and roses at the Rainbow Greenhouses in neighbouring Chilliwack. A labour contractor on well-known Fraser Valley feedlines. They supply area farmers with workhorses, many of them newly arrived from South Asia, whose transport they arrange. For this service, they take a portion of each worker's salary. Sukhwinder jumped at the chance.

On the rainy morning of March 5, Sukhwinder awoke feeling ill, and considered staying home from work. Her family urged her to rest, but she did not want to miss her shift. It was only her third day on the job. En route to Rainbow Greenhouses, the black Dodge van in which she was riding flipped on Hwy. 1, just after 6 a.m., landing upside down on a concrete barrier near the Sunset Way exit. Sukhwinder was one of three women from the Indo-Canadian community killed. Shoes and purses belonging to the van's 17 female occupants landed the road, some ending the crash zone. One week later, Sukhwinder's granddaughter, Margreet's second child, was born in an Abbotsford hospital.

BY RABY MACDONALD

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